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Seen yet unseen : women as leaders in small rural communities

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Women as leaders in small rural communities

by

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INTRODUCTION

Historical Perspective

Women have been called the best "untapped resource" in rural America (Barret 1987:70). They exhibit the flexibility needed for dealing with the crises facing rural communities. When women take on leadership roles, rural America benefits, Barret reports. However, women often have not been allowed to take on formal leadership roles in their communities and the work they were allowed to do often has not been recognized as the work of community leaders.

Women's endeavors have not been well recorded. Hampsten (1982:2) in her study of women's private writing during the period 1860 to 1910 in North Dakota, notes:

> Women are noticed for not being like other women. For if one of the criteria of "true womanhood: is to be supportive of others (men and children) and inconspicuous oneself, then it is not likely that one will be remarked upon as a maker of history.

In the mid-19th Century, life in rural Midwestern America was sex-segregated and patriarchal. As people moved west, they preserved conventional sex roles (Hampsten 1982). Traditional stereotyping of gender roles has been a part of the rural social structure (Hoggart and Buller 1987). Three main images that persist are: women as supportive wives and mothers; women as defenders of family and local community norms; and women as cheap labor pool. Both men and women in

rural areas hold the dominant female stereotype of woman as homemaker -- not woman as community leader.

Juster (1979) compiled writings from newspapers, magazines and popular books of the period 1865 to 1895, noting that such literature mirrored the lives of the women who read and wrote it. In his study he notes:

> Woman's place during the late 19th Century. . .was that of supporter and follower -- the one who adapts and makes do. Her work was the anonymous background for someone else's meaningful activity (1979:9).

Juster went on to note:

> Women's work never attained a recognition or dignity of its own. Serious articles on farming or rural life rarely mentioned the woman's contribution for its own sake or in its own terms but only as it related to man's work and well being (1979:133).

The plight of rural women was recognized decades ago by the Commission on Country Life -- which had no women members (Ford 1978). The commission deplored the condition of farm women, saying their lives were more monotonous and isolated no matter what the economic status of their families. In its report (1911:103) the commission stated that "the success of country life depends in very large degree on the woman's part." The report went on to say that "the farm women should have sufficient free time and strength so that she may serve the community by participating in its vital affairs" (1911:105). She should serve her community, not lead it. She should participate in her community, the

report noted, through mothers' clubs, reading clubs, church societies and home economics organizations.

Rural women have not been content merely to serve their communities and have pursued more active leadership roles in ways that were open to them, such as volunteerism. However, because volunteer work is not paid work, often it is not taken seriously (Daniels 1988).

Williams and Rodeheaver (1989) studied the two registers "Who's Who in America" and "Who's Who Among Black Americans" from the year 1925 to 1988. From their cursory examination of data from the two registers, it appears:

> that women have increasingly entered more socially visible occupations since 1925. . . . However, women are still under-represented when compared to their male counterparts (Williams and Rodeheaver 1989:109).

The changing farm scene seems to have played a role in helping rural women come to the forefront in their communities. Farm women have formed agricultural organizations and are involved in non-farm community organizations. Often, those women belonging to some community organization belonged to more types of farm organizations than did other women (Jones and Rosenfeld 1981). Women have tended to represent their families in community activities (Rosenfeld 1985).

In the 1980s, farm and rural women activists in the farm movement have taken leadership roles in saving their farms and communities, especially at the grassroots level. Some rural women have described their response to the farm crisis as "a search for strength through community" (Bruns and Hardesty 1987:39).

Tomorrow's Leaders Today

Today, a group of rural Iowa women are developing their leadership skills to take on leadership roles in their communities. They are participants in the Tomorrow's Leaders Today (TLT) program, offered by the Iowa State University Cooperative Extension Service. Tomorrow's Leaders Today is a program designed to develop rural leaders for economic development and revitalization in small Iowa communities. The program develops and enhances the leadership skills of women and men in communities with populations under 5,000.

The program is based upon the concept "that community leadership is the critical factor in the future of small rural communities" (Powers 1987:6). Community leadership capacity will play an important role in determining which communities succeed or fail in their efforts to maintain or increase quality of life and bring about economic development.

In TLT, emerging community leaders receive training to:

--improve their leadership skills,

--broaden their vision of the possibilities for rural revitalization,

--help them explore and learn new community development processes,

--help them become aware of and be able to apply new economic development strategies,

--give direction to their efforts on the basis of issue identification in their own communities (Powers 1987:7).

Participants in TLT learn to work with other leaders in their own communities and in groups of neighboring communities called "clusters." After a community cluster is accepted into the TLT program, individuals from each community within the cluster are recruited to receive the leadership training. A concerted effort is made to recruit women into the program. In the program's first three waves, 209, or approximately 42 percent, of the 495 participants have been women.[1]

Statement of the Problem

Although researchers have been studying leadership for decades, no one yet has been able to come up with one

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[1]Wave I refers to those men and women who participated in the TLT program from March to December 1988; Wave II, from September 1988 to June 1989; Wave III, from September 1989 to expected completion in June 1990.

definition that satisfies everyone (Lombardo and McCall 1978). Traditionally, Lombardo and McCall state, leadership theories have been short-range and atomistic. In addition, many studies describe what leaders and their followers say they do, could do, or should do, but seldom describe what they actually do.

Researchers have been too restrictive in their study of leadership, according to Pondy (1978). Most theories of leadership identify only a limited number of strategies, or a particular style, or a certain definition of effectiveness. Pondy suggests that researchers document the variety of leadership strategies, redefine what is meant by leadership style and expand the definition of leadership effectiveness. As Yukl (1981:5) states:

> Whenever feasible, leadership research should be designed to provide information relevant to the entire range of definitions, so that over time it will be possible to compare the utility of different conceptualizations and arrive at some consensus on the matter.

Yukl (1981:5) went on to encourage researchers to "use the various conceptions of leadership as a source of different perspectives on a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon."

One perspective that is missing is that of rural women. Leadership is not defined in rural women's terms. To explain this situation, each half of this missing perspective should be addressed -- the "rural" and the "women".

A plethora of definitions of leadership in men's terms exists (Heller 1982; Adams and Yoder 1985). Leadership study began as a "great man" theory, defining the traits of leaders. As the theory's name implies, being a man was prerequisite to being a leader (Heller 1982). Other theories of leadership developed, yet being male continued to be prerequisite to being included in the research. Mackie (1988:2) notes:

> Often male-only research was implicitly or explicitly generalized to persons of both sexes (e.g., that people respond to leaders generally as they respond to male leadership).

This lack of definition is part of a larger problem in society. Because of male gender bias, both men and women generally accept male categorizations of social phenomena. Tomm and Hamilton (1988:xvi) note:

> Women's place in the schema has been secondary to men's; consequently, scholarship by women and about women's activities and interests has been considered relatively trivial compared with the work of men as defined by men.

Bernard (1973:787) states that

> Women have been so trained to accept the male definition of almost every situation, to accept the reality constructed by men, that it takes a considerable amount of consciousness raising to get them to construct their own, even to believe in it.

The sociology of knowledge perspective helps one understand how such a situation came to exist. The sociology of knowledge studies "the relation between thought and society. It is concerned with the social or existential

conditions of knowledge" (Coser 1968:428). All knowledge and ideas, to some degree, are bound to locations within the social structure, Coser says. Berger and Luckman (1967: 189) say the sociology of knowledge "understands human reality as socially constructed reality."

Traditionally, men have been the ones who have constructed reality, who have determined what knowledge is. Throughout society, men have been the theorists, defining knowledge with a male bias (Bernard 1973, Smith 1974). As Spender (1983:1) states:

> While both sexes may have been making theories for as far back as we can trace, only one sex is seen as the theorists, one sex has its theories accepted as legitimate, only one sex owns the realm of theory.

This larger problem of male gender bias throughout society is far beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it must be addressed when studying leadership and women. When leadership is studied in men's terms, it simply means that the terms that explain or define leadership do not include women, or act to exclude them. Studying leadership in women's terms means to include women in the formation of the definition, or at the very least, not to exclude them from the definition.

Some definitions of leadership in women's terms do exist, but these definitions tend to be based on an organizational setting (Lipman-Blumen 1983), an often, it

seems, urban setting. Many community leadership and power studies, in addition to focusing on men, have focused on larger-population, urban communities (Hunter 1974; Lynd and Lynd 1974; Dahl as cited in Lyon 1987). Thus, the other half of this missing perspective, the "rural," either is not included or may even be excluded from the definition of leadership.

Becoming a leader depends not only on acting as a leader. It also may depend on being recognized by others as a leader or potential leader (Kruse and Wintermantel 1986). Bateson (1967:24) notes:

> Many studies using the reputational approach for identifying public leaders do no even mention women, leaving the impression that women's absence from the leadership structure either is so common that it is taken for granted or that their appearance as leaders is so rare that they are not considered as an important group for analysis.

Often women have not been included in leadership studies because community knowledgeables have not identified them as leaders.

Bem and Bem (1970) identified the nonconscious sex-role ideology which operates when people who consciously reject sex role stereotypes use them anyway. They define a nonconscious ideology as a set of beliefs and attitudes which a person accepts implicitly but which remains outside his or her awareness because alternate conceptions of the world remain unimagined. Social influences that produce

nonconscious ideologies are powerful and pervasive. The best example of a nonconscious ideology, according to Bem and Bem, is that of the beliefs and attitudes many Americans hold about women. Males and females in United States society hold hidden prejudices about woman's "natural" role. These nonconscious beliefs perpetuate numerous practices that keep woman "in her place" in the home -- not out in the community as a leader.

Many of the more blatant aspects of this nonconscious ideology have been rejected; more men take on domestic chores and child care, and both men and women support feminist issues. However, as Bem and Bem acknowledged, both men and women find it more difficult to reject some of the more subtle aspects of a nonconscious sex-role ideology.

The nonconscious ideology suggests, in terms of leadership, that women have little chance to be seen and acknowledged as leaders even if they're acting in such a way that would lead to the perception of leadership in men (Offermann 1986). These women would be invisible as leaders.

Becoming a leader also may depend upon seeing oneself as a leader. With a nonconscious sex-role ideology in force, in combination with an overriding image of men as leaders, and a lack of definitions of community leadership in rural

women's terms, rural women may be less likely to see themselves as leaders in their communities.

Objectives

If women join a program entitled "Tomorrow's Leaders Today," they probably have some vision of leadership and of themselves as some type of leader. Discovering that vision is the purpose of this thesis. Moyer et al. (1977) found that women community leaders want a better understanding of how to become better leaders. It would seem that rural women are still interested in becoming better leaders, judging by their participation in the Tomorrow's Leaders Today program.

The objectives of this thesis research are:

1. to discover a definition of leadership that is in rural women's terms;
2. to determine the extent to which rural women will identify themselves as leaders in their communities and the factors which influence the identification.

The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy in its report "Revitalizing Rural America" (1986:3) noted that one of the "urgent realities" facing rural areas is their dependency on volunteer leadership. Rural America needs a strong leadership base to survive and cannot afford not to have the full efforts of all its potential leaders,

including women. If one understands how rural women define leadership and their views of themselves as leaders, one can develop programs that meet their definitions and thus better develop their leadership skills. This research also may begin to fill the gap that exists in the study of leadership - the lack of research dealing specifically with leadership and rural women.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the general literature on women and development in the United States, rural women are stereotyped as isolated farm wives and small town homemakers (Moen 1986). The literature understates rural women's contributions to home, farm and community, Moen says, contributing to policies that reinforce traditional gender stereotypes and perpetuate discrimination against rural women. Today rural women are doing more, but more is expected of them. They are busy in the work place, yet still are expected to keep the traditional home fires burning.

Turning to the literature on leadership, power and community, one realizes that women have taken on leadership roles in their communities, but that their involvement often has not been recognized as leadership. In addition, women themselves often have not viewed themselves as leaders.

Identifying Rural Women

Eaton (1984:98) states that "empowering women as leaders depends fundamentally on the establishment of familiarity with and about women." In a rural context then, the task is to become familiar with rural women. Rural women are not a specific, homogeneous group, although the term sometimes is used as if they were such a group (Ronan 1979). In reality,

rural women in the United States are farm women, town women, women representing a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds.

Although there are some 34 million rural women in the United States, they often have not surfaced in statistics (Clark 1982, Lee 1982). This statement has a historical basis. American farm women made up the "largest class of economically useful women" (Quick 1913:436), and much of the prosperity of American agriculture in the past was due to the unpaid work of women and children (Atkeson 1929). According to Faragher (1981:537), American rural farm women have been "among the most underrepresented of all Americans in the standard histories" even though they made up a majority of the female population into the twentieth century. He suggests a reason for this historical neglect: "Historians have not heard rural women because they have listened to the powerful, not the powerless" (1981:538). The historical works that do exist have persistent themes, Faragher continues: women's biographies "presented as moral lessons" (1981:539); women as a civilizing force on the male frontier; rural women working while urban "ladies" have leisure. Rural women as community leaders has not been one of the themes.

Knowles (1988:304) states that even into the beginning of this century, rural women did not have access to the

"complex web of women's organizations" to which urban women belonged. She adds (1988:311) "instances of collective action by rural women, even on their own behalf, are rare." However, rural women "neighbored" (Neth 1988). They organized much of the informal social life in rural areas. Neth (1988:339) states:

> By creating this social sense of community, women built the base that was the key to success for both local institutions and farm organization throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While men dominated formal offices and leadership roles at all levels of these organization, women connected the political programs and formal structures to community traditions giving the organizations their grass roots base and a cultural and social meaning that intensified loyalty and group cohesiveness.

Women did participate in and build their rural communities, Neth states. They built neighborhood unity. From the food for threshing day to the church Christmas pageant, women organized events and celebrations to create a "sense of community," Neth says.

During the first half of the twentieth century, rural women created their own formal organizations, Neth continues. Often such organizations had four goals:

> to build social cohesion and unity, to raise money for neighborhood improvements, to educate the community and the group's members, and to improve women's working conditions (Neth 1988:341).

Moen (1981) discusses Moen et al.'s study of two Colorado energy boomtowns. She notes that "women are playing an important role in helping the community maintain

and improve the quality of life" (Moen 1981:151). Women provide equilibrium for a community through their formal and informal organizations, volunteer work, and mutual aid societies and networks. They organize activities for children and families and provide "vital but generally unseen support for men's organizations" (Moen 1981:162). Boulding (1981:121), also discussing Moen et al.'s study, states that they found evidence of "a high level of community bonding among women, and of substantial resources for community problem solving."

Stoneall (1983), in her case study of a rural Midwestern community, found women to be especially active in three arenas of that community -- community organization, economic contributions and political activities. Clark (1982) notes that at the local level, rural women have found ways to start cooperatives, provide community services, and help other women find jobs. Women do all this in their communities yet often are not recognized as leaders.

Lee (1982) feels rural women are a forgotten species -- their problems and needs have gone undocumented and unnoticed. Data related to rural women in the U.S. do not seem to exist, she says. To some extent that seems true, since much of the data on rural women and development deal with the Third World specifically, or with developed countries generally. In that sense, research about rural

women has increased in the last decade (Hoggart and Buller 1987).

There has been an increase in research on United States women, but often the research has not been extended to rural women or the rural family (Moen 1986). According to Haney (1982) there is information available about women in rural America, but usually women and their activities aren't the focus of the research. She states:

> We are relatively ignorant about the everyday world of rural women and how their lives are specifically circumscribed by social processes and public policies (1982:124).

Today rural women are caught in a "double bind" (Dunne 1985). They are independent -- many work outside the home and bring home their own paychecks. Yet rural women also are conservative and traditional, believing in traditional female roles, and the importance of home, family and community. They hold the idea of the "good woman" who doesn't complain about hard work, is relatively subservient to her husband, and does most of the household chores. The two visions come together, sapping a woman's strength, Dunne states.

Little (1986:6) notes that rural women's domestic role is an important underlying cause of the inequalities they face: "The rural ideology projects a caring domestic image which acts to restrict their life-styles and limit their experiences." Still, the roles and responsibilities of

rural women today are more complicated and diversified than the image of the farm wife who cooks meals, cares for her children and helps with farm chores (Bescher-Donnelly and Smith 1981).

Rural women represent every race, ethnic group, social class and economic situation (Dunne 1981). Their skills are diverse, and there are implicit contradictions in their lives: womanly delicacy versus female competence; family oriented versus career oriented. Rural women envision themselves as both homemakers and wage earners.

Haney (1982) notes the need for new approaches and renewed commitment to the study of rural women. Stoneall (1983) agrees, adding that community researchers have neglected the activities of women, and there is a lack of studies abut women in communities.

Community Leadership

In 1968, Freeman (1968:2) wrote:

> Despite the great amount of attention devoted to problems of community leadership in the past few years, no consensus has been achieved on either the meaning of the term or the proper approach to its study.

More than 20 years later, the confusion about the meaning of community leadership persists. However, this is hardly surprising since researchers agree on neither the

definition of community (Warren and Lyon 1988) nor the definition of leadership (Lombardo and McCall 1978).

Hillery (1982) identified 94 definitions of community in sociological literature. Lyon (1987:5) offers a summary definition of community: "People living within a specific area sharing common ties and interacting with one another." According to Vandenberg et al. (1987), current research on leadership is too narrowly focused to provide a useful basis for community leadership development. Leadership has been defined as many things including a set of traits required in all situations; a set of behaviors required in all situations; a variable set of traits or behaviors determined by the circumstances of each situation; a transaction of mutual influence; and a set of personal beliefs about effective leaders.

Karmel (1984:65) suggests viewing leadership not as a single concept, but as a collection of concepts sharing the common theme "behavior that makes a difference in the purposive behavior of others." Leadership then, can be thought of as a process. Hollander (1984) too, calls leadership a process, one that depends on the relationship between leaders and followers.

So, what is leadership in terms of community? The North Central Regional Interest Network on Community Leadership Programs (1984:5) offers a definition of community

leadership that includes several recurring points in the literature:

> Community leadership is that which involves influence, power and input into decision-making over more than one sphere of activity in a geographic area. The area may be a town, county or region going beyond county lines.

Nix (1977) has identified common elements in the literature on community, community leadership and community action. In his review, he states that communities are made up of people and groups who have different interests and goals. Also, leadership exists in communities in patterned forms, and community leaders can be identified. Further, only a few community members become actively involved in community decision making.

Prewitt (1970) notes that community life can't be organized unless there is some hierarchy or ranking -- some people lead and others are led. According to Freeman (1968), community leadership has two components. First, a small group within the community makes decisions, and second, these decisions affect the lives of many of the community members. In addition, the decisions often involve allocating community resources.

Garkovich (1989) states that communities have many potential leaders. Becoming an actual leader depends in part on being in the right place at the right time -- being "available, prepared and perhaps indispensable for a number

of different positions" (Vidich and Bensman 1974:68). Further, once an individual has been recognized publicly as a leader, he or she may acquire additional positions simply because he or she has become known as a leader.

A range of leadership structures can exist in different communities and in the same community through time (Nix 1977). Freeman (1968) suggests that community leadership structure be viewed as a continuum. At one end one would find large differences in social prestige, and leadership in the hands of a single group with common interests. At the other end, one would find egalitarian collectivist systems.

People may be included or excluded from the community leadership structure because of place of birth, age or length or residence (Schaffer and Schaffer 1970). Individuals who were not born in the community, are "too young" or "too old," or have not lived in the community "long enough" may not be allowed into the leadership structure. Women often have been excluded from the formal leadership structure because of their gender.

Power in the Community

Like community and leadership, power too, is an elusive term. Often people say they "know" what power is and can "tell" if a certain individual or group has more power than another. Yet, they may have difficulty defining or measuring power (Kaufman and Jones 1970). The definition of

community leadership mentioned earlier included the term "power." In reviewing the literature on leadership and power, one often sees each defined in terms of the other. Perhaps this is because there is a need to see leadership and power "as not things but as relationships" (Burns 1978:11). Further, Burns (1978:12) states, understanding leadership "requires understanding the essence of power, for leadership is a special form of power." All leaders have power, Burns suggests, but not all people who have power are leaders.

Power is part of all social relationships and activities (Stamm and Ryff 1984). This social power is the basis of leadership. It is "the capacity to determine the action of others" (Nix 1977:9).

Fessler (1976) notes three types of power in the community: legitimate authority, influence and coercion. According to Weber (1968), the power of legitimate authority may be based on legal authority, tradition, or charismatic grounds. French and Raven (1968) explain legitimate power as being based on a person's perception that someone else has a legitimate right to prescribe behavior for him or her. In a community, Fessler says, power of legitimate authority is based upon the role a person holds, such as an elective or appointive office. Power of influence is based in part upon a person's skills, knowledge and personality. It also

is based partly on other people's willingness to follow a person's leadership. As Fessler describes it, power of influence seems to combine Weber's charismatic authority and French and Raven's expert power. Power of coercion, Fessler says, is based upon a person's ability to force other people to act. Fessler seems to combine French and Raven's coercive power and reward power when describing power of coercion in a community.

The three types of power are not mutually exclusive. As Fessler (1976:29) points out:

> In small, relatively isolated communities the power of legitimate authority may belong to those individuals who hold the power of coercion or the power of ascribed influence or both.

People who have power of legitimate authority, influence or coercion control the community through formal and informal arrangements. This is a basic assumption underlying the concept of power in the community (Ehrlich 1974). Power is something that often is not distributed equally in a community (Mott 1970, Swanson et al. 1979). Some positions, individuals and organizations in a community are perceived as more powerful than others, Ehrlich states. Women often have not been perceived as powerful because of their gender.

Women and Leadership

As stated earlier, women often have not been allowed to take on formal leadership roles in their communities and the

work they have been allowed to do often has not been recognized as the work of community leaders. Historically, rural America has been sex-segregated and patriarchal (Hampsten 1982). Women were allowed to be wives, mothers and low-paid or unpaid laborers -- not community leaders. Lipman-Blumen (1983:62) suggests:

> That women have not had a major share in leadership roles is seen as further proof of their shortcomings -- another case of "blaming the victim."

The work women did in their communities and the way they went about doing it, did not fit male definitions of leadership. Bem and Bem (1970) would call this a manifestation of the nonconscious sex-role ideology. This lack of "fit" persists today. As Crosby (1988:40) notes:

> The word "leader" continues to evoke a distinctly male image, when, in fact, women leaders are all around, although often not in the same places as male leaders.

Crosby (1988:40) cites Rollo May, noting that "conception precedes perception," thus:

> The difficulty of seeing women as actual and potential leaders is rooted in our conceptions both of leadership and of women's roles.

There exists, Crosby states, a basic conceptual problem about dividing human affairs into a public realm and a private realm. Leadership is part of the public realm (where the men are), while women belong in the private realm (where leadership is not). Crosby suggests that leadership

exists throughout human existence, and that neither women nor men should be regulated to a private or public realm. Taking such a view, one can begin to understand why both men and women may have difficulty seeing women as leaders in their communities.

Leadership study began as a "great man" theory, defining the traits of leaders. As the theory's name implies, Heller (1982) states, being a man was prerequisite to being a leader. Leader qualities were seen to be those qualities that typically were presumed to be male, such as ambitions, competitiveness, dominance, rationality and independence (Kruse and Wintermantel 1986). Following this stereotype, women's attributes and behaviors were seen as the opposite of what would be expected of a leader (a "great man"). So women would not be recognized as being leaders (Kruse and Wintermantel 1986).

Other theories of leadership came about -- behavioral, situational, transactional -- and although "being a man" was no longer implied in the theory names, it was still a prerequisite for research. Studies were conducted with men, and sex differences were not considered (Heller 1982, Kruse and Wintermantel 1986). Adams and Yoder (1985) estimate that systematic research on women as leaders has only been conducted since 1970. Citing Bender, they note that early

studies simply substituted women for men in traditional leadership research designs and examined what happened.

A number of forces, including the women's movement, equal opportunity laws, and the development of role theory led to the study of sex effects in leadership (Heller 1982). The research that has been conducted on women and leadership has passed through three phases, Heller notes. First, researchers examined women's under-representation in leadership ranks. Next, researchers turned to determining the psychological and sociological barriers to women taking on leadership roles. Most recently, Heller says researchers have been examining the differences and similarities between women and men as leaders. Looking to the future, Adams and Yoder (1985) suggest that researchers take a societal perspective in their study of leadership in general, and particularly in their study of women as leaders. Russell et al. (1988) note the need for studying women's perceptions of effective leadership.

Reviewing the literature on women and leadership, one continues to find evidence of a male leadership bias. This should not necessarily be interpreted to suggest that the studies themselves are biased. Rather, research has shown that a male leadership bias exists among those who are studied (another manifestation of the nonconscious sex-role ideology).

Hollander and Yoder (1984) suggest that role expectations is one of the major factors that affects leadership. In mixed-sex groups, women are less likely to be leaders than men. Further, they are less likely to see themselves as leaders or to seek leadership roles. Reviewing several studies, Hollander and Yoder state that people expect men to fill leadership roles. Neither men nor women expect to see women in leadership roles. No matter how dominant a woman may be, "she is unlikely to become a leader when a man is available" (Hollander and Yoder 1984:236). Also, men are more likely to select themselves as future leaders of groups than are women.

When men are present in a group, women leaders may have more difficulty being visible. In mixed groups, Aries (1985:415) found, men initiate and receive more interaction than women:

> In a society where it is considered appropriate for women to be submissive to men, sex-role pressures led men to assume leadership in the mixed groups.

In addition, women tend to conform more to group pressure (and be submissive) in mixed groups than in all-female groups, Aries notes.

Hollander and Yoder (1984) note that successful women leaders have to deal with societal attitudes that do not favor them achieving success as leaders. Women must cope with the fact that their success as leaders is not valued by

men or other women. To handle this role conflict, and be an effective leader, a woman must redefine either her feminine role or the leadership role, they add.

In studying small group interaction, Bales (1950) divided it into a focus on task areas and a focus on social-emotional areas. Lipman-Blumen (1983) notes the two focuses also are qualities of leadership, task orientation and social-emotional or people orientation. Task-oriented functions include information and opinion giving and seeking; direction giving; summarizing; coordinating; and evaluating (Kokopeli and Lakey 1978). People-oriented functions (Kokopeli and Lakey call them morale functions) include encouraging participation; harmonizing and compromising; relieving tension; helping communication; and active listening. The balance between the two is uncertain, but some organizational leadership studies suggest that effective leaders combine the two orientations. Heller's (1982) work indicates that when women and men are in a group and women are leaders, they take on both orientations, or roles. She cites how this finding differs with Slater's 1955 study of Harvard men which found that emergent male leaders would play one role or the other in a group, but not both.

To emerge as a community leader, a person has to be seen as competent by the other members of the community. This is

the notion of perceived competence (Lips 1981), a notion that disfavors women. Laboratory studies have shown that when sex is the only information known about a person:

> women are considered less competent than men. . . and that male success is more likely to be attributed to ability than is female success (Lips 1981:160).

Lips (1981:160) continues:

> Thus, in mixed-sex groups where participants know little about one another, the women may be seen initially as less competent than the men, and thus they will be less likely to emerge as leaders.

Leadership roles in many areas have this male stereotype, Lips states, so even when a woman is seen as competent, "she may still not meet the image requirements of leadership" (1981:161).

Heller (1982:xv) notes:

> The inclusion of women in the study of leadership might challenge and redefine basic assumptions about the way people in positions of authority behave.

The knowledge that is leadership can be redefined. The redefinition will involve a paradigm shift from a leadership that is male-oriented and disadvantageous to women, to a leadership that integrates values of the female ethos (Rogers 1988). This leadership would not simply compare women to a male standard. A new standard of leadership, which women help create and define, would credit, rather than devalue, their experience.

Women and Power

If a person is not looking for something, often he or she will not find it. If one does not attempt to determine women's place in the structure when examining community power studies, then one probably will not find women in the community power structure. Such has been the case in the study of community power. Women were not identified in many early community power studies (Bokemeier and Tait 1980, Moyer et al. 1977, Bateson 1974). Their absence from the studies reinforced a "taken-for-granted assumption of women's absence from the community power structure" (Bokemeier and Tait 1980:238).

Moyer et al. (1977) who did study women in the power structure, noted that these women did not suddenly become active in their communities because of a force such as the Women's Movement.[1] Instead, it was more likely that the women's activity was "a long-standing phenomena in community structure which simply has not been studied in any depth" (Moyer et al. 1977:17-18).

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[1]Moyer et al. studied women in the power structure in Chippewa County and Eau Claire County, Wisconsin. They compared three samples: one from the traditional power structure, identified through reputational techniques; an "active woman" sample, identified through a combination of reputational, positional and decision-making techniques; and a next-door-neighbor comparison group of women.

Stamm (1984) credits feminist scholars with getting women to be seen as active members of their communities who do have influence and power. These scholars did not accept the idea that women have a position of "secondary or negligible importance in society" (Stamm 1984:15). Stamm notes the need to take an interpretive approach to understand women's power. When people look only at normative social systems and formal institutional structures, they create a bias against women. Such a view will tend to define women as powerless and of secondary status in society, Stamm says. This bias is especially evident for rural women, Little (1986:7) notes:

> The power of women in rural communities is particularly constrained by a very strong conservative ideology which, as well as perpetuating the domestic role, maintains the status quo and works against any form of united political action by women.

Women have been involved in community activities, though often in secondary roles (Bokemeier and Tait 1980). Because women have held secondary roles, they have not been perceived as participating in community decision making, or as having power.

Like the study of leadership, the study of power, too, has tended to have a male bias, according to Josefowitz (1985), focusing on outcomes - a male orientation - rather than on relationships - a female orientation. The knowledge that is power was defined not by women but by men. In men's

terms, power means things such as increased public visibility or income. But "the lives of women challenge the existing paradigms that were constructed to explain the lives of men" (Giele 1984:191). These existing male paradigms say that women are powerless. When women are studied on their own terms, when their own experience is given value, their power and their contribution to society are found to be greater than when their accomplishments are measured only against a male standard, Giele notes. Generally, men are perceived to have more power than women because men are more visible in the public sphere. However, if one broadens one's view of power following Crosby's (1988) suggestion for broadening one's view of leadership, one would look for power throughout human existence rather than only in a "public sphere." If one attempts to look for women's power, one has a better chance of finding it. Ryff (1984:59) notes:

> The study of women's power and influence focuses frequently on aspects of the social structure as within the family, work place, community, or the society, and how these various structures do or do not convey authority to women.

Just as women and men have difficulty seeing women as leaders, they also have difficulty seeing women as powerful. Lips (1981) found that women were more likely than men to identify women as powerful. However, both women and men were more likely "to think of men when thinking of powerful

figures" (Lips 1981:9). Women tend to attribute power to others - namely to men - and women, more so than men, feel the need to use expertise as a power base (Josefowitz 1985). Few of the rural women Fink (1986) interviewed described a sense of personal power. Information regarding their power often came from other sources and indicated that a particular woman was powerful in her home, church or community affairs.

Troll and Schwartz (1984) say achievement is central to women's concept of personal power, and signifies personal accomplishment. It also represents the acquisition of skill or knowledge, both of which are potential forms of power. According to Stamm and Ryff (1984), women's power is multifaceted, varies depending on the situation, and changes over time. Also, women's power often is at work "outside of formal societally defined authority" (Stamm and Ryff 1984:3).

Earlier, it was stated that power is related to leadership. One opportunity then that women may have to increase their power, and thus their access to resources, expertise and society's status systems, is to increase their leadership capacity. However, women will have a difficult time increasing their leadership capacity unless they can look beyond a male-only image of leadership, can be

recognized as leaders by others, and can see themselves as leaders.

HYPOTHESES

From its "great man" beginnings to the present, leadership study has tended to have a male bias, and the word "leader," for both men and women, has conjured a male image (Heller 1982, Crosby 1988). Also, much leadership research has not included rural people or has not been conducted in a rural setting. Thus, one perspective of leadership that is missing is that of rural women.

The first research objective is to discover a definition of leadership that is in rural women's terms. Davidson et al. (1983) note that hypothesis testing alone is not sufficient to solve a research problem. Both hypothesis testing and generation are necessary. Thus, to carry out this objective, the women participants of Tomorrow's Leaders Today will provide a definition of leadership. They will generate a definition of leadership which will be used in data analysis. As Davidson et al. (1983:108) suggest:

> Participants' perceptions can provide as legitimate a base for empirical measurement construction and validation as do theoretical perspectives or existing standard measures in the field.

They go on to note that too often participants are an untapped source of information and data.

The second research objective is to determine the extent to which rural women will identify themselves as leaders in their communities, and the factors which influence the

identification. To carry out this objective, six hypotheses will be tested.

Many people hold a nonconscious sex-role ideology that women's role is not that of community leader (Bem and Bem 1970). Further, women are less likely to see themselves as leaders and must cope with societal attitudes that neither favor them achieving success as leaders, nor perceive them as competent in leadership roles (Hollander and Yoder 1984, Lips 1981). Thus it is hypothesized that:

H1: The women participating in the Tomorrow's Leaders Today program will be less likely than the men to view themselves as leaders.

H2: The more that women have been discouraged from taking leadership roles, the less likely they are to see themselves as leaders.

H3: The more barriers women perceive they face in becoming leaders, the less likely they are to see themselves as leaders.

If women join a program entitled "Tomorrow's Leaders Today," they probably have some vision of themselves as leaders. As Moyer et al. (1977) found, women community leaders want a better understanding of how to become better leaders. Kruse and Wintermantel (1986) suggest that becoming a leader depends in part on being recognized by others as a leader. Thus it is hypothesized that:

H4: The more that women have been encouraged by others to take on leadership responsibilities, the more likely they are to see themselves as leaders.

H5: The more that women believe others see them as leaders, the more likely they are to see themselves as leaders.

Leaders may be task-oriented or people-oriented or have both orientations to some degree (Nix 1977, Lipman-Blumen 1983, Heller 1982). One generalization about differences in male and female behavior is that men will tend to be more task-oriented, while women will tend to be more socio-emotionally or people-oriented, Lipman-Blumen notes. Perhaps this generalization has its roots in inherent differences in male and female behavior. More likely it is tied to a traditional male construction of reality. A person who accepts a male-biased view of leadership would see a leader as task-oriented, not people-oriented. If women tend to be more people-oriented but view leadership as task-oriented, they would be less likely to see themselves as leaders. However, if they viewed leadership as people-oriented, they would be more likely to see themselves as leaders. There would be congruence between their view of themselves and their view of leadership. Thus it is hypothesized that:

H6: Women who have a people-oriented view of leadership will be more likely to see themselves as leaders than will women who have a task-oriented view of leadership.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted as part of a larger study of all male and female participants in the Tomorrow's Leaders Today program. All 495 participants from waves I, II and III of the program were mailed the "Tomorrow's Leaders Today Leadership Questionnaire" on November 17, 1989. Follow-up postcards were mailed to all TLT participants on November 27, 1989. A reminder letter and replacement questionnaire were mailed December 11, 1989, to those participants who had not yet returned their completed questionnaires.

This thesis research focused on the 209 female participants. Of this total, 137 females completed the questionnaire, a response rate of approximately 66 percent. Responses of the male participants were utilized in some of the analyses. The data were analyzed using the SPSSx and SPSSpc computer programs. The female respondents were asked both closed-ended and open-ended questions in order to carry out the research objectives, and test the hypotheses. Some demographic information also was requested.

The first objective of this thesis research was to discover a definition of leadership that is in rural women's terms. To carry out this objective the respondents were given the opportunity to provide their own definition of leadership. They were asked the open-ended question: "What does the word leadership mean to you?" (See Appendix,

question 1.) Their responses were categorized and incorporated into the data analysis.

To gain further insights about the women's definition of leadership, the women were asked to rate five items dealing with different views of leadership found in the literature (see Appendix, questions 8 through 12). The women's ratings of these items were compared to the definition of leadership derived from their open-ended responses.

The second objective of this thesis research was to determine the extent to which rural women will identify themselves as leaders in their communities and the factors which influence the identification. To carry out this objective, six hypotheses were tested.

The dependent variable in this research is the women's degree of perceived leadership. To operationalize this variable, the women were asked whether they considered themselves leaders in their communities. This question was followed by open-ended probes, asking why the women did or did not consider themselves to be leaders. Later in the questionnaire, women were to rate a statement about their leadership in their communities and clusters (see Appendix, question 2, 7). Responses to the open-ended probes were categorized and analyzed.

Several independent variables were operationalized:

- degree of discouragement from taking leadership responsibility
- perceived barriers to becoming leaders
- degree of encouragement to take on leadership roles
- belief that others see the women as leaders
- leadership orientation

To operationalize "discouragement," women were asked to rate a statement about being discouraged from taking leadership roles in their communities (see Appendix, question 5). To operationalize "barriers," women were asked to rate eight items that have been found to be barriers to leadership (see Appendix, questions 14 through 21). The women's responses to the eight items first were examined individually. The items the women found to be barriers were combined to produce a scale to measure "barriers."

To operationalize "encouragement," women were asked to rate a statement about being encouraged to take on leadership responsibilities in their communities (see Appendix, question 4).

To operationalize "belief," women were asked to rate a statement regarding whether other people would identify them as leaders (see Appendix, question 6). To operationalize

"leadership orientation," the definition of leadership that the women provided was categorized into people-oriented and task-oriented aspects.

ANALYSIS

Description of the Study Population

The population for this study consisted of the 209 women who participated in waves I, II and III of the Tomorrow's Leaders Today program. Of that number, 137 women returned their completed questionnaires, for a response rate of approximately 66 percent.

The women ranged in age from 22 to 73 years, with a mean age of approximately 41 years. The standard deviation was approximately 10 years. The women had lived in their present community from one year to 73 years. The mean time was approximately 20 years, with a standard deviation of approximately 14 years.

Their educational level varied from less than a high school education to some post college education. Only one woman, or 0.7 percent had not graduated from high school. Thirty-three women or 24.3 percent had finished high school. Sixty-four women, or 47.1 percent had completed some college or technical school. Another 23 women or 16.9 percent were college graduates, and 15 women, or 11.0 percent had some post college education.

Development of a Leadership Definition

The women's responses to the open-ended question "What does the word leadership mean to you?" were analyzed.

Fourteen response categories were developed based on the analysis of their handwritten open-ended responses. The categories represent 14 aspects of leadership that were most often included in the women's responses. The following definition summarizes the 14 aspects of leadership that the women identified:

> Leadership means getting things done, accomplishing a goal. It involves a team effort, working together with others. A leader inspires or motivates others to follow him or her. Leadership is guidance. Yet, a leader can take charge or give direction. A leader can organize and delegate. A leader has a vision, or looks to the future, and can initiate ideas or projects. A leader takes responsibility and can handle a variety of situations. A leader listens to others and can bring out the best in others.

The women's definitions were coded as a multiple response group using the 14 categories representing aspects of leadership. During analysis of the open-ended responses, it was found that the women's definitions included from one to five of the leadership aspects. Thus, each woman's definition, when coded, could include up to five of the categories. A multiple response frequency procedure was conducted with the 14 categories of leadership. Results of the procedure are shown in Table 1.

Other less frequently mentioned aspects of leadership were found in the women's open-ended responses. They included:

Table 1. Multiple response frequencies of leadership aspects defined by rural women

Leadership aspects	Number	Percent of Responses	Percent of Cases
Getting things done, completing tasks	50	21.1	40.7
Team effort, cooperating with others	27	11.4	22.0
Others will follow you	26	11.0	21.1
Guiding others	23	9.7	18.7
Taking control, taking charge	20	8.4	16.3
Giving direction	19	8.0	15.4
Ability to organize	17	7.2	13.8
Ability to delegate	11	4.6	8.9
Has vision, looks to the future	9	3.8	7.3
Ability to initiate, get things started	7	3.0	5.7
Taking responsibility	8	3.4	6.5
Handling a variety of situations	8	3.4	6.5
Listening to others	6	2.5	4.9
Bringing out the best in others	6	2.5	4.9
TOTAL RESPONSES	237	100.0	192.7

- Four women said knowledge or intelligence were required of a leader.
- Four women said a leader should be open-minded.
- Three women said leadership involves taking risks.
- Three said being a leader means being an active participant in a committee, organization, community.
- Three said a leader is willing to spend time on community projects.
- Two said a leader encourages others.
- Two said a leader can handle criticism.

Only one woman referred to a leader as being male, and only one woman referred to a leader as being female.

To gather additional information about how these women would define leadership, they were asked whether or not they agreed with each of five definitions of leadership found in the literature (see Appendix, questions 8 through 12). Response frequencies are shown in Table 2.

Testing of Hypotheses

H1: The women participating in the TLT program will be less likely than the men to view themselves as leaders.

To test H1, two cross tabulations were conducted utilizing both female and male respondents. Responses to the question "Do you consider yourself a leader in your community or cluster?" were cross tabulated by sex. As shown in Table 3, the data did not support the hypothesis at

Table 2. Women's agreement with definitions of leadership found in the literature

Leadership definitions	Number of women who agreed	Percent of women who agreed
Effective leaders have certain characteristics such as intelligence, knowledge and self-confidence.	131	95.6
Effective leadership varies from situation to situation.	126	92.0
People will follow people who act like leaders.	118	87.4
Followers influence leaders as much as leaders influence followers.	96	70.6
Leaders are effective if their followers think they are effective.	90	66.2

Table 3. Perceived degree of leadership by sex[a]

Perceived degree of leadership[b]	Sex			
	Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%
Definitely not a leader	1	.6	5	3.8
Probably not a leader	29	16.9	25	18.8
Probably a leader	95	55.2	77	57.9
Definitely a leader	47	27.3	26	19.5
TOTAL	172	100.0	133	100.0

Chi-square = 6.00.

p = .11

Missing cases = 4 female; 4 male.

[a]Perceived degree of leadership was obtained from responses to the question "Do you consider yourself a leader in your community or cluster?"

[b]Response mean = 2.9 for women; 3.1 for men.

the .05 level (chi-square = 6.0, p = .11). However, the women's mean response to the question was 2.9, indicating a reluctance to declare themselves leaders. The men's mean response was 3.1.

Responses to the statement "I am one of the leaders in my community" also were cross tabulated by sex. As shown in Table 4, the data did not support the hypothesis at the .05 level (chi-square = 1.81, p = .61). Both the women's and men's mean response to the question was 2.9, indicating some uncertainty about their perceived degree of leadership.

To gather more data about the women's perceived degree of leadership, their responses to two open-ended probes were analyzed. The probes followed the closed-ended question "Do you consider yourself a leader in your community or cluster?" Those women who responded that they definitely were not or probably were not leaders were asked the open-ended question, "If no, why?" Their handwritten open-ended responses to this question were analyzed, and five response categories were developed based on this analysis.

In their responses, most of the women focused on one reason they did not consider themselves leaders. Three women mentioned a second reason. A frequency procedure was conducted with the five categories, as shown in Table 5. Sixteen of the 30 women who answered the question, or 53.3 percent, stated they did not consider themselves leaders

Table 4. Perceived degree of leadership by sex[a]

Perceived degree of leadership[b]	Sex			
	Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly disagree that I am a leader	1	.6	3	2.2
Disagree that I am a leader	43	25.1	30	22.6
Agree that I am a leader	105	61.4	83	62.4
Strongly agree that I am a leader	22	12.9	17	12.8
TOTAL	171	100.0	133	100.0

Chi-square = 1.81.

p = .61.

Missing cases = 4 female; 5 male.

[a]Perceived degree of leadership was obtained from responses to the statement "I am one of the leaders in my community."

[b]Response mean = 2.9.

Table 5. Frequency distribution of women's reasons they do not consider themselves leaders

Reasons	Number	Percent
Not a leader because of a personal characteristic	16	53.3
Lack of time	5	16.7
Not involved in community or organizations	4	13.3
Haven't lived in the community long enough	3	10.0
Not interested in being a leader	2	6.7
TOTAL	30	100.0

because of some personal characteristic. Their responses included: "too shy"; "I'm not one to initiate ideas"; "My personality is not the leader type"; "Don't have enough self confidence"; "I have always been a follower." Five women (16.7 percent) stated they were not leaders because they lacked time. Three additional women mentioned lack of time as a second reason that they did not consider themselves leaders.

Those women who responded that they probably were or definitely were leaders were asked the open-ended question "If yes, why?" Their handwritten responses to this question were analyzed and five response categories were developed based on this analysis. In their responses, the women stated one to three reasons that they considered themselves leaders. Thus, each woman's response, when coded, could include up to three of the categories. A multiple response frequency procedure was conducted with the five categories. Results of the procedure are shown in Table 6.

Thirty-three of the 87 women (37.9 percent) who responded to the open-ended question said they were leaders because they could get things done. Their responses included: "things accomplished, evidence is in action and results"; "I like to take charge to get things done"; "I can see a need that should be addressed and devise a plan to get

Table 6. Multiple response frequencies of women's reasons they consider themselves leaders

Reasons	Number	Percent of Responses	Percent of Cases
Gets things done	33	32.7	37.9
Positions held	23	22.8	26.4
Active in the community	20	19.8	23.0
Others say so	13	12.9	14.9
Works with others	12	11.9	13.8
TOTAL RESPONSES	101	100.0	116.1

it done"; "Because I've taken on some of the responsibility of getting things done and organizing."

Twenty-three women (26.4 percent) said they were leaders because of positions they held in organizations and on committees. Twenty women (23.0 percent) said they were leaders because they were active or involved in their communities, not necessarily specifying that they held any formal leadership positions.

H2: The more that women have been discouraged from taking leadership roles, the less likely they are to see themselves as leaders.

To test H2, the women's perceived degree of leadership was cross tabulated by level of discouragement. Perceived degree of leadership was obtained from responses to the question "Do you consider yourself a leaders in your community or cluster?" while level of discouragement was obtained from responses to the statement "Other people have discouraged me from taking a leadership role in my community." As shown in Table 7, the data did not support the hypothesis at the .05 level (chi-square = 1.31, p = .52). However, it should be noted that 97 of the 133 women responding (73 percent) have never been discouraged from taking leadership roles in their community. Yet, as shown in Table 3, their mean response to the question "Do you consider yourself a leader in your community or cluster?"

Table 7. Perceived degree of leadership by level of discouragement

Perceived degree of leadership	Level of Discouragement			
	Never discouraged		Have been Discouraged	
	No.	%	No.	%
Not a leader	20	20.6	10	27.8
Probably a leader	59	60.8	18	50.0
Definitely a leader	18	18.6	8	22.2
TOTAL	97	100.0	36	100.0

Chi-square = 1.31.

p = .52.

was 2.9. This would indicate that although the women have not been discouraged from taking on leadership roles, they are still hesitant in identifying themselves as leaders.

H3: The more barriers women perceive they face in becoming leaders, the less likely they are to see themselves as leaders.

Frequency distributions were run for each of eight barriers to leadership (see Appendix, questions 14 through 21). Each was found to be a barrier to leadership to some extent. Table 8 shows the number of women who indicated that each item was a barrier to leadership for them.

A Pearson correlation was conducted using the eight barrier items and the women's perceived degree of leadership, as obtained from the question, "Do you consider yourself a leader in your community or cluster?" Perceived leadership correlated positively with the barrier "gender." However, perceived leadership correlated negatively with the other seven barriers: lack of confidence, lack of knowledge, exclusion from community groups, lack of time, lack of interest, inability to speak in public, inability to run meetings.

These seven barriers were combined to produce an overall barriers scale. The reliability coefficient of this scale is .72 (Cronbach's Alpha), with a mean inter-item correlation of .27 ($F = 52.66$, $p < .001$). A Pearson

Table 8. Women's indications of barriers to leadership

Barrier	Number of women indicating the barrier	Percent
Lack of time	123	90.5
Lack of knowledge	109	80.1
Lack of confidence	103	76.3
Gender	85	63.0
Inability to speak in public	84	61.8
Inability to run meetings	68	50.0
Lack of interest	58	42.6
Being excluded from community groups	52	38.2

correlation was run using the barriers scale and perception of leadership. As shown in Table 9, the data support the hypothesis. The correlation of barriers and perception of leadership was statistically significant. As the women's perception of barriers they faced increased, their perception of themselves as leaders decreased.

The correlations of barriers with education and age also were statistically significant, as shown in Table 9. As education level increased, perception of barriers decreased, and as age increased, perception of barriers decreased.

H4: The more that women have been encouraged by others to take on leadership responsibilities, the more likely they are to see themselves as leaders.

To test H4, the women's perceived degree of leadership was crosstabulated by level of encouragement. Perceived degree of leadership was obtained from responses to the question "Do you consider yourself a leader in your community or cluster?" Level of encouragement was obtained from responses to the statement "Other people have encouraged me to take on leadership responsibilities in my community." As shown in Table 10, the hypothesis was supported (Chi-square = 14.51, p = .00). The more encouragement women received, the more likely they were to see themselves as leaders.

Table 9. Pearson correlation of perception of leadership, education, age and barriers to leadership

	Perception of leadership	Education	Age	Barriers
Perception of leadership	1.00[a] (133)[b] p = .[c]	.25 (132) p = .002	-.05 (131) p = .282	-.46 (131) p = .000
Education	.25 (132) p = .002	1.00 (136) p = .	-.12 (134) p = .082	-.30 (134) p = .000
Age	-.05 (131) p = .282	-.12 (134) p = .082	1.00 (134) p = .	-.20 (132) p = .012
Barriers	-.46 (131) p = .000	-.30 (134) p = .000	-.20 (132) p = .012	1.00 (135) p = .

[a]Coefficient.

[b]Number of cases.

[c]1-tailed significance; "." is printed if a coefficient cannot be computed.

Table 10. Perceived degree of leadership by level of encouragement

Perceived degree of leadership	Level of encouragement			
	Rarely encouraged		Often encouraged	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Not a leader	18	38.3	12	14.0
Probably a leader	26	55.3	51	59.3
Definitely a leader	3	6.4	23	26.7
TOTAL	47	100.0	86	100.0

Chi-square = 14.51.

p = .00.

H5: The more that women believe others see them as leaders, the more likely they are to see themselves as leaders.

To test H5, the women's perceived degree of leadership was cross tabulated by their belief that other people in their community would identify them as leaders. Perceived degree of leadership was obtained from responses to the question "Do you consider yourself a leader in your community or cluster?" Their belief was obtained from responses to the statement "People in my community would identify me as a leader in the community." As shown in Table 11, the hypothesis was supported (Chi-square = 37.70, p = .00). The more that women believed others saw them as leaders, the more likely they were to see themselves as leaders.

H6: Women who have a people-oriented view of leadership will be more likely to see themselves as leaders than will women who have a task-oriented view of leadership.

The 14 aspects of leadership the women identified in their definition of leadership were categorized according to leadership orientation. Seven aspects were categorized as task-oriented: getting things done; taking control; directing; organizing; delegating; initiating; and taking responsibility. Six aspects were categorized as people-oriented: cooperating; gettings others to follow

Table 11. Women's perceived degree of leadership by belief that others identify them as leaders

Perceived degree of leadership	Belief that others identify them as leaders: Disagree No.	Disagree %	Agree No.	Agree %
Not a leader	17	68.0	12	11.3
Probably a leader	6	24.0	70	66.0
Definitely a leader	2	8.0	24	22.7
TOTAL	25	100.0	106	100.0

Chi-square = 37.70.

p = .00.

you; guiding; handling a variety of situations; listening; and bringing out the best in others. The aspects of having a vision did not fit either categorization. (See Table 1 for the women's responses to this aspect.)

Leadership orientation was coded as a multiple response group. A frequency distribution showed that approximately 58 percent of the responses were task-oriented, and 42 percent were people-oriented. The women's perceived degree of leadership was cross tabulated by leadership orientation. Perceived degree of leadership was obtained by asking the women if they considered themselves to be leaders in their communities or clusters. As shown in Table 12, there was little variation in the women's perceived degree of leadership when cross tabulated by leadership orientation. The multiple response procedure in SPSSx does not calculate statistical significance.

Table 12. Perceived degree of leadership by leadership orientation

Perceived degree of leadership	Leadership Orientation			
	Task-oriented		People-oriented	
	No.[a]	Percent	No.	Percent
Not a leader	37	28.2	21	22.3
Probably a leader	70	53.4	62	66.0
Definitely a leader	24	18.4	11	11.7
TOTAL	131	100.0	94	100.0

[a]Percents and totals are based on responses.

CONCLUSION

The first objective of this thesis was to discover a definition of leadership that is in rural women's terms. To meet this objective, the participants of the Tomorrow's Leaders Today program were given the opportunity to provide their own definition of leadership. To address the "rural" perspective, this rural group of participants was used in the study. TLT participants come from small rural communities with populations of 5,000 or fewer. To address the "women's" perspective, the female participants' definitions were analyzed.

The summary definition of leadership that these rural women produced did not include anything inherently rural. However, some of their individual definitions were phrased in terms of community. Although they were not asked to place leadership in a setting, if they did so, they placed it in community.

Only one woman referred to a leader as being male, and only one woman referred to a leader as being female. A leader's gender was not an issue in the women's definition of leadership. However, their own definition did not exclude them, as women, from being considered leaders. Their definition was not stated in men's terms which exclude women. Sixty-three percent (85 women) did indicate that their gender has been a barrier to their development as

leaders. Since their definition of leadership did not mention gender, one could conclude that the barrier of gender is being created by outside forces rather than by the women themselves - outside forces influenced by a male construction of reality or the nonconscious sex-role ideology (Bernard 1973, Smith 1974, Bem and Bem 1970).

When given the opportunity to agree or disagree with five definitions of leadership taken from the literature, the women agreed that all five indeed describe part of what leadership means. Their answers seem to support Pondy's (1978) suggestion that a variety of leadership strategies exists, all of which can expand the definition of leadership effectiveness. Also, they seem to support Yukl's (1981) suggestion that the various conceptions of leadership offer different perspectives on a complex phenomenon.

The second objective of this thesis was to determine the extent to which rural women will identify themselves as leaders in their communities and the factors which influence the identification. Of the entire group of women, 77.4 percent (103) consider themselves leaders. This high rating is not surprising, given that the women had participated or were participating in a leadership development program, a program they had voluntarily entered. One could surmise that participants in such a group would be more likely to consider themselves leaders than the general rural

population. But even in such a self-selected group of leaders, 57.9 percent (77 women) showed their uncertainty about their leadership ability, saying they probably were leaders.

Being discouraged from taking leadership roles was not found to be a factor related to the women's identification of themselves as leaders. Seventy-three percent (97 women) reported that they had never been discouraged from taking leadership roles in their community.

Orientation to leadership (task orientation and people orientation) was not found to be a factor influencing the women's identification of themselves as leaders. One hundred thirty-three women (97.8 percent) indicated they had a people oriented view of leadership.

The perception of barriers to leadership was found to be a factor related to the women's identification of themselves as leaders. The more barriers the women perceived they faced, the less likely they were to perceive themselves as leaders.

Being encouraged by others to take on leadership responsibilities was found to be a factor related to the women's identification of themselves as leaders. The more encouragement the women received, the more likely they were to see themselves as leaders. Believing other people identify them as leaders also was found to be a factor

related to the women's identification of themselves as leaders. The more that the women believed others would identify them as leaders, the more likely they were to see themselves as leaders.

Again, 77.4 percent (103 women) do consider themselves leaders. They are receiving encouragement to take on leadership responsibilities and they do believe other people recognize them as leaders. They are looking beyond a male-only image of leadership, and are defining leadership in a way that does not exclude them as women.

This research dealt with only 137 rural women, far too small a number for the findings to be generalized to the entire population of rural women in the United States. The author makes no claim to do so, but small steps often lead to larger steps.

The definition of leadership that these women developed is a valid definition, and is offered for testing with other groups. Other rural women could be asked the open-ended question "Do you consider yourself a leader in your community?" to see if they include similar aspects of leadership in their definitions. They could rate the 14 categories of leadership aspects that the TLT women mentioned. The factors that influenced the extent to which the TLT women would identify themselves as leaders, were factors that had been identified in the leadership

literature. Would other rural women rate these factors similarly to the TLT women? How would other rural women rate the barriers to leadership that the TLT women identified?

This research is a beginning. Perhaps it will influence others to look further, to try to fill a gap that exists in the study of leadership - the lack of research dealing specifically with leadership and rural women.

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APPENDIX

Selected Questions from the Tomorrow's Leaders Today Leadership Questionnaire

1. Leadership means different things to different people. There is no one "right" definition. We are interested in finding out what leadership means to men and women in rural Iowa. What does the word "leadership" mean to you?

01	get things done/accomplishment/completes task
02	team effort/work with others/cooperating
03	others will follow you
04	guide/guidance
05	take control/take charge
06	directs/direction/directing
07	can organize/is organized
08	delegating/delegates
09	has vision/looks to the future/looks forward
10	initiates/gets things started
11	takes responsibility
12	handle variety of situations
13	listening/can listen to others
14	brings out the best in others

2a. Do you consider yourself a leader in your community or cluster?

1. No. Definitely not a leader.
2. No. Probably not a leader.
3. Yes. Probably a leader.
4. Yes. Definitely a leader.

2b. If no, why?

1. not involved in communities or organizations, or not enough involvement
2. lack of time, too busy
3. does not consider self a leader because of a personal characteristic
4. not interested in being a leader
5. not in community long enough, not included

2c. If yes, why?

1. positions held, committees, organizations
2. can get things done
3. others say I am, others listen to me
4. active, involved, concerned for community
5. works with others, encourages and motivates others

3. Two types of leaders are described below. If you had to choose one over the other, which type of leader would you rather work with?

1. A leader who is competitive and wants to win. A leader who solves problems rationally. A leader who keeps control, remains unemotional, and analyzes situations.

2. A leader who is cooperative, and works with followers as a team. A leader who is concerned with quality output. A leader who uses both intuition and rational thinking to solve problems.

4. Other people have encouraged me to take on leadership responsibilities in my community.

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Once in a while
4. Often
5. Quite often

5. Other people have discouraged me from taking a leadership role in my community.

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Once in a while
4. Often
5. Quite often

6. People in my community would identify me as a leader in the community.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Agree
4. Strongly agree

7. I am one of the leaders in my community.

   1. Strongly disagree
   2. Disagree
   3. Agree
   4. Strongly agree

8. Effective leaders have certain characteristics, such as intelligence, knowledge and self-confidence.

   1. Strongly disagree
   2. Disagree
   3. Agree
   4. Strongly agree

9. People will follow people who act like leaders.

   1. Strongly disagree
   2. Disagree
   3. Agree
   4. Strongly agree

10. Effective leadership varies from situation to situation.

    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Agree
    4. Strongly agree

11. Followers influence leaders as much as leaders influence followers.

    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Agree
    4. Strongly agree

12. Leaders are effective if their followers think they are effective.

    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Agree
    4. Strongly agree

13. Why did you decide to participate in the Tomorrow's Leaders Today program?

Some possible barriers to developing one's full potential as a leader are listed below. For each, circle the number which indicates the degree to which that barrier has blocked your development as a leader.

14. Your gender.

    1. Not a barrier
    2. Minor barrier
    3. Medium barrier
    4. Major barrier

15. Lack of confidence

    1. Not a barrier
    2. Minor barrier
    3. Medium barrier
    4. Major barrier

16. Lack of knowledge

    1. Not a barrier
    2. Minor barrier
    3. Medium barrier
    4. Major barrier

17. Being excluded from community groups

    1. Not a barrier
    2. Minor barrier
    3. Medium barrier
    4. Major barrier

18. Lack of time

    1. Not a barrier
    2. Minor barrier
    3. Medium barrier
    4. Major barrier

19. Lack of interest

    1. Not a barrier
    2. Minor barrier
    3. Medium barrier
    4. Major barrier

20. Inability to speak in public

    1. Not a barrier
    2. Minor barrier
    3. Medium barrier
    4. Major barrier

21. Inability to run meetings

    1. Not a barrier
    2. Minor barrier
    3. Medium barrier
    4. Major barrier